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Getting 'Up' for the Meet: A Sociological Analysis of Drug Usage in the Sport of Olympic Weightlifting

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Getting 'Up' for the Meet:
A Sociological Analysis of Drug
Usage in the Sport of Olympic Weightlifting

A Thesis

by

Douglas C. Cooney

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Sociology

December 1975

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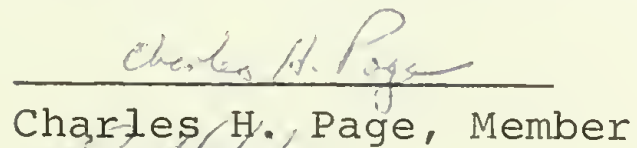
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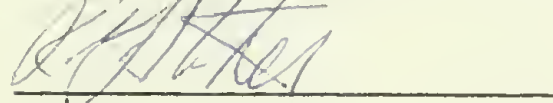
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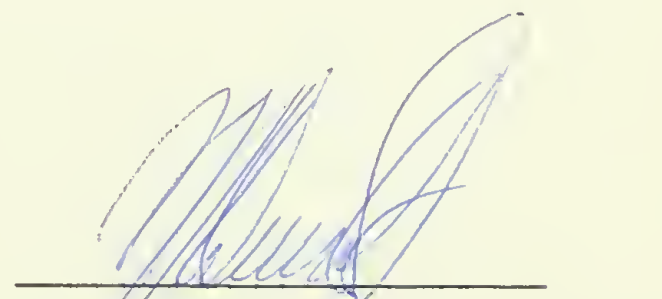
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Finally, I would like to address the fraternal organization known as Olympic weightlifters. Indeed a small subculture which I have become so fond of and one which has become so much a part of myself. To my lifting friends-- I dedicate this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the sociology of sport has emerged as a serious enterprise within recent decades. As John Talamini and Charles Page, in their essay, "The Mounting Interest In Sport," note: "sport sociology has become a rapidly growing and professionally reputable specialization of international scope."¹ This thesis emerged, in part, as a result of that specialization. The sport of olympic weightlifters is the subculture under analysis. More specifically, this thesis will examine the emerging role that instrumental drugs have taken within the sport of olympic weightlifting.

Drug usage in sports has received much publicity, becoming very prominent in the late 1960s. The rapid increase of drugs being used by athletes provided one of the more controversial issues of the 1968 Olympic games staged in Mexico City.

The sport of olympic weightlifting, with which I have been associated for six years, has been one of the main users of instrumental drugs to aid performance. This thesis will deal with drugs which in function are primarily additive.²

¹John T. Talamini and Charles Page, Sport and Society (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), p. 11.

²It is important to distinguish additive from restorative drugs in that the former attempt to exceed "normal" capacities of the competitors. Anabolic steroids and amphetamines are two types of drugs classified as additive.

These drugs are used with the intention of stimulating an athlete beyond his normal capacities. The better known of additive drugs include substances classified as amphetamines and anabolic steroids.

This thesis, beyond acquainting the reader with drugs in sport medically and technically, will undertake the exploration of three issues. First, the process by which the athlete becomes acquainted with the use of drugs and how this in turn may lead to the use of drugs. It will be important here to examine to what extent drugs are seen as necessary, by the athlete, to participate in competition. It is my contention that the source of information, concerning drug attitudes, will provide a powerful force in the decision of the athlete to incorporate drugs in his training regime.

The second issue to be presented deals with the process by which the athlete legitimizes his use of drugs. What is significant here is the process of development of the self conception as an athlete and the social forces which sustain such an identity. If indeed not all athletes use drugs to enhance athletic performance, then by what process does the user rationalize such behavior?

The final issue, arising out of the previous issue, is how the athlete maintains a set of values related to drug usage. In this regard, I shall examine to what extent, if any, the "self" of the athlete enters into the decision to participate in the use of instrumental drugs. One major

consequence of the processes through which deviant identity is imputed is the tendency of the deviator to become caught up in a deviant role (Schur, 1971). Thus, the "role-engulfment" an individual encounters may be instrumental in the maintenance of such values. Similarly, are the "techniques of neutralization" (denial of serious injury, assertion that there is no real "victim") oftentimes used by delinquent youths to rationalize their offending behavior and maintain positive self-concepts.

The organization of this thesis is as follows. Chapter I provides the reader with an introduction to the phenomena of drugs in athletics. Within this chapter there appear several themes. First is a discussion of what drugs serve what functions. Second, and most important, is an analysis of previously existing literature on drugs in athletics. In this context, I present those issues dealt with in magazines (e.g., Sports Illustrated) and books (e.g., Meggysey, 1970; Sample, 1970).

Chapter II deals primarily with the literature on the sociology of deviance. Here I present notions as set forth by such authors as Becker, Goode and Schur in reference to deviant behavior. Of particular significance here is the concept of "sub-culture" and the implication for the maintenance of deviant identities. Further, I shall examine the perspectives as set forth by these authors as they relate to instrumental drug usage by weightlifters.

Chapter III utilizes several forms of data upon which to draw inferences related to the issues of this thesis. The primary source of data for this thesis is twenty interviews with athletes in the sport of olympic weightlifting. The secondary source of data is comprised of a combination of participant observations as well as observations I've made by virtue of my being an active member of the sport. By focusing upon one particular sport, I hope to be able to describe the set of changes in a person's conception of a particular activity. Further, I hope to delineate the experience provided for the individual in terms of attitudes held towards drugs as influenced by peers.

Chapter IV begins with a discussion of the methodology involved in relation to this particular research project. The athletes selected for interviews range from beginners to world class competitors. One advantage I had in dealing with this data set is my own experience within the sport of olympic weightlifting. The fact that I am an "insider" lends substance to the validity of the interviews used in this project. In the course of presenting the findings, I elaborate upon my own experiences where useful. Also within this chapter is the presentation of findings in light of those issues explored as well as implications for future research.

are used by a variety of individuals. The use of amphetamines (speed) extends from truck drivers, students, people on diets, to the athlete. The effect of amphetamines varies, though usage is associated primarily with a suppression of appetite, an increase in pulse rate, and finally a euphoric high. Amphetamines have become popular in athletic circles in that many athletes contend that such aids give them an extra push.

Whether or not such amphetamine products actually result in physical improvement in terms of performance is questionable. Many critics argue that any increase of athletic performance may really be psychological. Since approximately 1890, more than 1000 studies have dealt with the effects of amphetamines on human performance.⁴ Most studies ignore the nonclinical populations (as in sport) with most studies being conducted in a clinical environment.

Out of those studies conducted in nonclinical situations, Smith and Beecher (1959) found that the use of amphetamines may increase performance in such endeavors as swimming, sprinting and shot putting by 3-5%. Similar conclusions were paralleled by Karpovich (1959) and Plotnikoff (1960). However, Pierson (1961) raised questions concerning the validity of Karpovich's and Plotnikoff's study.

Other studies concerning the effects of amphetamines on athletic performance have been conducted by the American

⁴Though such a large number of studies have been conducted on amphetamines relatively few have dealt directly with athletic performance.

College of Sports Medicine (1958), Seashore and Ivey (1953), Office of Naval Research (August 1958), Tyler (1945), Lovingwood (1963) and Sommerville (1946).

The most consistent finding of these studies is the effect that amphetamines have in ameliorating feelings of fatigue produced by prolonged work. The studies are in conflict over any actual psychomotor, physical, or mental improvement as a result of taking amphetamines. In fact, some of the literature suggests the converse to be true. The use of amphetamines may in fact result in deleterious effects taking the form of dizziness, flightiness and the like. Thus, whether or not such stimulants actually do improve psychomotor, physical, or mental performance has not been conclusively answered.

Anabolic steroids are another category of drugs that have made their presence felt in sport competition. Anabolic steroids are a synthetic derivative of the male hormone (testosterone).

The effects of androgens (testosterone) are both androgenic and anabolic in scope. The androgenic effects are those associated with secondary sexual characteristics such as growth of facial and body hair, deepening of the voice, and development of the sexual organs. Anabolic manifestations of androgens promote growth and development by an increase in protein

synthesis through greater nitrogen retention.⁵

"Originally steroids were developed for underweight patients recovering from debilitating illnesses. The undesirable (androgenic) effects limited the scope of their applicability. During the past decade, however, a number of compounds with favorable anabolic-androgenic activity have been developed and utilized. The newer chemicals have broadened the context within which steroids may be employed." Drill and Saunders (1956) produced a synthetic steroid which proved to have only 6% of the androgenicity of testosterone. "Such advancements in the chemistry of steroid compounds explains, in part, the increased usage among athletes." There are, however, other sociological factors which enter into and sustain such decision-making processes, as we shall see.

"The anabolic effects of testosterone are the more desirable (from the perspective of the athlete taking them). The human body loses nitrogen through the exercise of tissue. The inability of the body to produce its own nitrogen necessitates the ingestion of protein. As indicated earlier, the anabolic action of androgens is an increase of nitrogen-retention in the form of protein tissue. Such effects of nitrogen-retention result in a decrease in the rate of amino acids which in turn results in a progressive gain in weight."

⁵I would like to extend my appreciation to Pat O'Shea of Oregon State University in his correspondence with me on the subject of steroids. One of the foremost researchers in the United States on anabolic steroids and athletes, Dr. O'Shea's personal correspondence helped enormously in this section of the thesis.

The mechanism by which steroids influence protein metabolism is not yet clearly understood. Kochakian and Murlin (1935) noted the nitrogen retention effects of anabolic steroids. Their findings indicate a weight gain in castrated dogs after receiving an injection of testosterone. Nathan, Cahill and Gardner (1963) in a study on the effects of large doses of testosterone on the human body, characterize testosterone as a protein and glucose sparing agent rather than an active protein builder. Torizuke (1963) reports, as does Albanese (1968), that anabolic steroids not only inhibit catabolism but also directly accelerate protein synthesis.⁶ In light of the inconclusive findings concerning the effects of steroid compounds on the body, it is interesting to note the gambit the athlete encounters in using such pharmaceutical products to enhance athletic performance.

In addition to investigation of the chemistry of steroid compounds, there are several studies conducted on strength development correlated to steroid usage. This item is worthy of particular scrutiny as the effect of steroids on strength development is in much controversy in the sports world at the present time. Simonsen, Hearn and Euger (1944) in a study on methyltestosterone treatment and muscular performance of subjects 48 years and older found a significant

⁶Epiphysical fusion is a process whereby, as maturation occurs, the cartilage around bone endings solidifies, normally occurring around the end of adolescence. Such occurs through the use of steroids in pre-pubital adolescence.

increase in strength during periods of testosterone injections. Samuels (1942) in examining steroids and strength development in young men between 21 and 30 years of age failed to note significant increases in strength when administering methyl-testosterone. Similarly, Fowler (1965) was not able to detect any positive effects of androstenolone on the strength or oxygen uptake ability of individuals in his study. Thus, whether steroid compounds actually do increase performance physiologically or whether reported improvements are psychological or a combination of the two remains unanswered.

If the use of steroids in themselves has caused concern in the sports world so too have the side effects. The National Collegiate Athletic Association Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports has condemned the usage of anabolic steroids by athletes. The Committee reports that the potential dangers resulting from steroid therapy include testicular shutdown, acute liver problems and prostatic hypertrophy. The committee also expressed the notion that complications resulting from long-term usage in the form of fluid retention cannot be minimized with current steroids. Albanese's (1969) findings indicate otherwise. Albanese feels that, based upon his findings, present-day synthetic anabolic steroids are almost entirely free of androgenic hepatotoxic and salt retention effects resulting from long-term usage. Also, Albanese notes that the application of steroids does not necessitate prolonged use. Thus, the

reader is once again faced with the inconclusive physiological findings. In spite of these redundant inconsistencies, there are several issues which deserve attention. These "sociological" issues will be dealt with in the remaining pages.

Drug Usage Within Sports

Sport shall be defined as a matching of two or more peers to determine who can best perform specified physical feats.⁷ Sport by definition has rules, the purpose of which is to equalize the criteria for competition. To make sport what it is, factors such as age, size, skill and sex must be as closely allied as possible. In recent years, instrumental drugs (defined as an artificial aide used with the intent of exceeding normal capacities) have become another variable which enters into the competition process. Rules in a sense attempt to govern such variables. So what may one say of the regulation of drugs in sport?

If one were to examine which sports are the most notorious for drug usage, horseracing would be among the top of the list.⁸ The reason for this is not that drugs do not exist

⁷This definition of sport may not account for all sports. What is considered sport may vary from one's perspective (e.g., Loy, Page, etc.). Whether one is talking about chess, "sporting houses," or golf, all or none may be included in one's definition of sport. Thus, I have narrowed the definition of sport to include competition by physical feats. The rationale for such is that this limits the sports in which drugs may be used as an instrumental gain.

⁸Bil Gilbert, "Drugs in Sport," Sports Illustrated (30 June 1969):37.

in other sports (top performers in many sports ranging from rowing to weightlifting admit their usage), but rather that the enforcement of the regulations in this sport is among the most stringent. In 1967, the National Association of State Racing Commissioners reported 65 cases in which illegal drugs had been used on horses.⁹

Outside of horseracing, cycling is another sport which has anti-doping regulations which are enforced. In 1965, Belgium and France passed tough anti-doping laws, but as Bil Gilbert notes in his article, "Drugs in Sport,"¹⁰ such laws have not caused any substantial let-up in their usage by cyclists. In 1967, Tom Simpson, the best English cyclist of his day, died in the Tour de France as a result of "overdose" of amphetamines. Joseph Rombaux, Belgium marathoner, was deprived of his national title after a test for amphetamines proved to be positive. Wayne LeBombard, an olympic speed skater, says, "The bennies are generally frowned on but they're also pretty generally used. Not with a needle, I don't know of any skater who goes that far. But there are a lot of pills."¹¹ A three-time British squash racquets champion of the 1930s, Don Butcher, was affectionately known as the Benzadrine Kid.

As for major American sports, amphetamine usage appears quite common in football. Among the professional football

⁹Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹Ibid., p. 39.

clubs: players, physicians and trainers of the Steelers, Chargers, Cardinals, Lions and Redskins have indicated the use of amphetamines in their respective clubs. "It usually seems to be the older players who think they need an extra lift to make it through a game that want them," says Joe Kuczo, the Redskin trainer.¹² "Sure, I took them (amphetamines) in college," says George Conner of Notre Dame and Chicago Bear fame.¹³

Jim Brosnan in The Long Season, a diary of his 1959 season as a major league pitcher, describes the use of amphetamines in a seemingly endless baseball schedule. Jim Bouton and Leonard Shecter talk about the use of amphetamines in their best-selling book, Ball Four. Still another instance of amphetamine usage in baseball is that of Chuck Dobson, a pitcher for the Oakland Athletics (now with the New York Yankees). Dobson, in an interview for the San Francisco Chronicle stated, "When you've got the flu and you've got to pitch, what are you going to do?"¹⁴ When asked what he thought of Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn prohibiting the use of amphetamines, Dobson replied, "I'd like to see him put on a uniform for 162 games in 180 days and then see what he says."¹⁵

Houston Ridge, a defensive tackle, filed suit of \$1.25

¹²Jack Scott, "It's Not How You Play the Game, But What Pill You Take," The New York Times Magazine (17 October 1971):41.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 107.

million against the N.F.L. charging conspiracy and malpractice in the use of drugs to increase performance. Ridge claimed he was given steroids, amphetamines and barbituates, "not for the purpose of treatment and care but for the purpose of stimulating his mind and body so he would perform more violently as a professional football player."¹⁶

Soon after the Ridge suit, Dave Meggysey, a seven-year linebacker for the St. Louis Cardinals, published his biography, Out of Their League. Meggysey attacked football, especially the professional ranks, as dealing in more drugs than the average junkie.¹⁷ In his book, Meggysey claims that Jack Rockwell, the Cardinal trainer at that time, had a "veritable drugstore" in his training room.

Dismissed by the conservative sports establishment because of his bearded, long-haired appearance, as well as his admitted use of psychedelic drugs, most of Meggysey's allegations were ignored. Soon after the publication of Meggysey's book, Ken Gray, captain of the St. Louis Cardinals, filed a \$1.79 million law suit against the Cardinals charging that "potent, harmful, illegal and dangerous drugs were administered to him by the Cardinals."¹⁸

The use of instrumental drugs (drugs which are used with the intention of increasing athletic performance) is by no means limited to any one particular sport. The kind of

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

drug taken and the quantity employed vary from sport to sport. Another case in point of amphetamine usage occurred at one major world competition. The 1970 World Weightlifting Championships, held in Columbus, Ohio was the site of disqualifications of nine competitors. Nine place winners of the first three weight divisions were tested and disqualified as the urine specimens revealed traces of an amphetamine substance.¹⁹ By the fourth day of competition (in world competition, there are nine days) competitors from Poland, Russia, Hungary and Japan were found guilty of using amphetamines.²⁰

"It was the first all-out crackdown on drugs in weightlifting, perhaps the most far-reaching ever in any sport, and although the lifters had been warned the FHI²¹ would enforce its rules against drugs, no one listened,"²² reported Herman

¹⁹While no members of the U.S. team were disqualified (none was entered until the fifth day of competition), several team members openly expressed in the local newspapers that amphetamines were commonly used in international competition.

²⁰It is interesting to note that many athletic journals, when speaking on the subject of drugs in sport, quite often make reference to the notion that European countries (especially the eastern European countries) have developed powerful, undetectable drugs which account for exceptional performances. Indeed, if such did exist, why is it that Poland, Russia and Hungary had entrants disqualified as a result of "doping?" Furthermore, it is difficult from an objective standpoint to discern how the United States, with perhaps the highest level of technology, does not have the best chemicals available.

²¹This is the international committee which handles the rules and regulations accorded the World and Olympic championships in Olympic weightlifting.

²²Herman Weiskopf, "Weightlifting," Sports Illustrated (28 September 1970):63.

Weiskopf. Even more controversial was the fact that only the first three place winners were being tested. The rationale of the committee was that each test cost \$40; thus, to test all the competitors would result in a financial loss. What is discriminatory about such practices is the likelihood that the fourth, fifth and sixth place winners were just as guilty of using the "ups" as were the top place winners.

Perhaps less widespread but nonetheless controversial in the sports world are anabolic steroids. As indicated earlier in this chapter, steroids were originally designed for the individual recovering from illness. Early in the 1960s, Dr. Ronald Ziegler began administering steroids to weightlifters of the York Barbell Club of York, Pennsylvania.²³ Upon hearing that the Russians were using steroid compounds to improve their weightlifters, Americans attempted to keep pace. "The trouble with the York men was that they began using too many steroids. They rationalized that if one pill was good, that three or four pills a day would be four times as efficient. Such is just not the case."²⁴

The use of steroids by top athletes has been made less public than amphetamine usage. The probable explanation of this is that synthetic steroids and their presence in the human body have not been detectable in the past.²⁵ It is noted

²³Gilbert, (7 July 1969):30.

²⁴Ibid., p. 30.

²⁵A recent editorial in one of the weightlifting journals makes reference to a new method (blood test) of detecting the presence of anabolic steroids in the human body. To my

in sports magazines that top athletes such as Randy Matson, Bill Toomey, Harold Connelly of track and field, Ken Patera (national weightlifting champion) have either openly or in private acknowledged the use of steroids. Upon being interviewed after his record-breaking performance in winning the 1971 Pan-American Championships in California, Columbia weightlifter Ken Patera said, "When Alexeyev (Russian world champion) and myself meet in Munich next year, we'll see whose steroids are better, his or mine."²⁶

Another episode of steroids and athletes involved a national high school shot putter who reportedly was taking 30 to 40 milligrams of a steroid compound.²⁷ (In this particular case, the recommended dosage by the pharmaceutical firm was 5 mg.) The track and field championships of Europe 1965 provide another illustration. Several Russian "women" competitors supposedly scratched rather than submit to the sex test. Apparently the Russian physicians had administered steroid compounds to the female competitors which may have affected the outcome of the sex test since testosterone is a male hormone. Rather than engage in a potentially damaging situation, in terms of embarrassment as well as propaganda, the competitors were withdrawn by the Russian officials.²⁸

Just as technology resulted in the development of am-

 knowledge, such a practice has not been implemented to date.

²⁶Scott, p. 41.

²⁷Ibid., p. 41.

²⁸Ibid.

phetamines and later a method of detection, such has been the case with anabolic steroids. Previously synthetic steroids were undetectable as a result of their genetic occurrence within the human body. There is a report from the British Sports Council which claims "to have found a way to detect the presence of body-building anabolic steroid drugs in athletics. Now a research group at St. Thomas Hospital Medical School, London, has developed tests which can detect the use of steroids by screening blood and urine samples."²⁹ One item particularly interesting is the fact that the research teams were financed, in part, over a three year period by the Sports Council of Britain. Chairman of that council is Sir Dr. Roger Bannister, the first man to run a mile under 4 minutes. Says Bannister,

I hope the I.O.C. (International Olympic Committee) and other sport authorities will accept this new technique and go on to introduce whatever further checks will effectively rid sport worldwide of the evils of drug abuse . . .³⁰

Drug Use as a Deviant Behavior

Thus far we have reviewed the technical definitions of drugs as well as specific cases of drug usage within athletics. There are, however, pressing sociological issues to be explored throughout the remainder of this thesis. Hence-

²⁹Thomas Holbrook, "The Iron Grapevine," Strength and Health (March 1974):16-17.

³⁰Ibid.

forth, I shall place heavy emphasis upon "why" particular athletes commit deviant behavior and in what way such users justify their behavior to themselves as well as others.

Traditionally, the study of deviant behavior (to be elaborated in the next chapter) has focused upon a variety of explanations. Some of these explanations have concentrated on the biological characteristics of the people practicing deviant behavior. Recent research into the "extra Y" chromosome's role in "Sociopathic" behavior would be an example of this type of approach.³¹ Other investigations have explored personality factors, holding that the deviant's "character structure" is causally related to why he or she commits unconventional behavior.³² Still another theoretical model would emphasize social and cultural factors--poverty, urbanism, anomie, or the absence of a normative and moral constraint, the tradition of professional crime in a neighborhood, and so on.³³

Still another area of concern, as Goode notes, is on the understanding of the enterprise and process of making judgments of deviance in others.³⁴ Why are certain forms of drug use thought to be deviant, immoral, dangerous? What goes into the making of negative evaluations of some activities

³¹Erick Goode, The Drug Phenomenon: Social Aspects of Drug Taking (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1973), p. 26.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

but not others? As Dinitz points out in his book, Deviance:

Only the use of certain classes of dangerous drugs--the narcotics, hallucinogens, and marijuana--are considered deviant. Because such use is labelled deviant, criminal and outside legitimate medical practice, users develop a life style quite far removed from that of straight society. The roles, statuses, functioning, and self-concepts of users are derived from this subculture.³⁵

It is paradoxical that the athlete may, on occasion, take dangerous drugs and still be considered a non-deviant by this definition. The only real difference is that the athlete takes drugs within the system (e.g., by prescription from a doctor); thus, he is not labelled deviant by society. In fact, quite the opposite occurs; society reinforces an individual athlete by attending the sporting event.

There appears within society inconsistency in relation to drug regulation. It is an interesting paradox of our society to condemn one form of deviance and condone another. The drugged athlete, for example, may not base his life style upon his use of drugs nor does society treat him in a negative way. It does appear, though, that the drugged athlete is doing something pragmatically harmful to society. That is, the athlete endangers his health, risks his reputation, breaks oaths and laws to obtain and utilize bizarre chemicals. The fact of the matter suggests that drugs in sport, dangerous drugs (as indicated previously, many of the drugs used in sport have undesirable side effects), are not as restricted as thought to

³⁵Simon Dinitz, Deviance (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 277.

be. The athlete who deals with drugs is in a subculture.

According to our original notion of deviance certain athletes do qualify as deviants--those that participate in drug usage. The only real difference is that society nicely looks the other way when confronted with the role of a drugged athlete. Apparently, society views some forms of deviance less disruptive than others, thus mitigating negative sanctions as in the case of drugged athletes. This issue will be taken up in greater detail in the next chapter.

C H A P T E R I I

DEVIANCE FOR WHOM?

In the last chapter, we noted the role that instrumental drugs have seemingly taken in the institution of sport within recent years. As sociologists, our task becomes quite clear in light of this phenomenon. That is, what may one say of the individual who does take drugs to enhance athletic performance? Does the user in some way differ in his perspective of winning as opposed to the non-user? More importantly, by what process does the user become acquainted with drugs and justify such behavior to others as well as non-users? These appear to be major issues of concern for the sociologist.

What will become evident, as this thesis unfolds, is that drug users are steadily influenced by the values of a deviant subculture. Such groups as athletes who use drugs are considered deviant when taking the perspective of the larger society. What in fact occurs is that many drug using athletes don't consider themselves as participating in deviant behavior. This is due primarily to the success of the deviant subculture in resocializing its members to that group's own normative expectations. In light of these preliminary observations, this chapter will focus upon past literature on deviance and subcultures as related to the research topic at hand.

Past Perspectives on Deviance

Merton and Nisbet³⁶ noted that the literature during the 1950s and 1960s demonstrated a rapid increase in the study of deviant behavior within American sociology. This new interest was, in part, due to disenchantment with previously existing definitions of deviance. Erickson³⁷ defines deviance as "behavior which violates institutional expectations; that is, expectations which are shared and recognized as legitimate within the social system." Within this definition, there appears the perspective of the group and the individual. If indeed the individual's behavior threatens the group to the point of embarrassment or danger, the group may "then bring special sanctions to bear against the person who exhibits it."³⁸ Erickson further states "deviance is not a property inherent in any particular kind of behavior, it is a property conferred upon that behavior by the people who come into direct contact with it."³⁹ A case in point is the morphine addict who is not a deviant simply because he has taken the drug. If the drug is administered in a doctor's office for medical treatment, it is not defined as deviance, but if it is given to him by an illegal "pusher" it is.

³⁶Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet, Contemporary Social Problems (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), p. 11.

³⁷Robert A. Dentler and Kai T. Erickson, "The Functions of Deviance in Groups," Social Problems 7 (Fall 1959):98.

³⁸Ibid., p. 6.

³⁹Ibid.

It may be that the notion of deviance is implicit in the very idea of society. Durkheim once wrote:

Imagine a society of saints, a perfect cloister of exemplary individuals. Crimes, properly so called, will there be unknown; but faults which appear venial to the layman will create there the same scandal that the ordinary offense does in the ordinary consciousness.⁴⁰

Within the literature there appear several major contributions to the study of deviance. David Matza, in his book Delinquency and Drift, notes, "persistent deviancy typically is not an individual or group innovation, it has a history of particular locales."⁴¹ That is, deviance is not unique to one particular group or individual.

In addition to Matza, another significant contribution to the study of deviance is in the works of Howard Becker. It is this author's contention that an interactive process between at least two kinds of people must take place in order for deviance to occur. Such a perspective rests on the assumption that there are those who commit a deviant act and those who constitute the rest of society. Becker sees the two groups as engaging in a complementary relationship, one not existing without the other. Such is the case of weightlifters who use drugs to aid their performance. Quite clearly, competitors attempt to label who is on drugs and who is not. No doubt

⁴⁰Emile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 68-69.

⁴¹David Matza, Delinquency and Drift (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1964), p. 63.

this provides the users with a stable reference group from which to identify each other. "He's one of us," typifies a response in this category.

This notion of labeling is implicit within Becker's work and is pursued further by Edwin Schur in his "labeling approach" to problems of deviant behavior and social control. Deviance and social control almost always involve processes of social definition. As Becker himself cogently notes:

. . . social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying these rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sometimes to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.⁴²

Central to the labeling approach is an emphasis upon process. Deviance is not, from this perspective, a static entity but rather a continuously shaped and reshaped outcome of dynamic processes of social interaction.⁴³ Within this framework the utility of labeling analysis appears similar to the perspective of symbolic interactionism. Objects are attached a meaning to which action is applied. Social responses are held towards the meanings of those objects by the individual. In and of themselves, objects have no meaning. Any

⁴²Howard Becker, The Outsiders (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p. 9.

⁴³Edwin M. Schur, "Reactions to Deviance: A Critical Assessment," American Journal of Sociology 75 (November 1969): 309-22.

meaning, towards objects, must be socially bestowed and socially sustained.

Deviance, if seen as a process, may utilize George Herbert Mead's theory of the social self. Blumer distinctly noted that "Mead saw the self as a process and not a structure."⁴⁴ Human action, according to Mead, could not be viewed as a product. Rather, as Blumer said, "the human being is seen as an active organism in his own right, facing, dealing with and acting toward the objects he indicates."⁴⁵ Social patterns reflect a continuous process, "of fitting developing lines of conduct to one another."⁴⁶

All of this becomes significant when speaking of drug users in competitive weightlifting. This notion of process becomes paramount when considering the values necessary to the initial testing and possibly continued use of the drugs. That is, the individual came into contact with a "role-model" of some form and was confronted with the drug user's perspective. Virtually all of the users I spoke with acknowledged that their utilization of drugs as an aide was a gradual process. Usually there was a period of experimentation whereby the novice started with small dosages in effect testing to see what the drug would do for their performance. Even before this "trial" period all of the lifters I spoke with said, in

⁴⁴Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," in Symbolic Interactionism, ed. Blumer (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 62.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 66.

one form or another, that they were skeptical concerning the utility of drugs. More importantly, though less overt, was the fact that these lifters were attempting to survey the values of the other lifters. The issue again surfacing is that such a phenomenon is a process containing a social history.

By drawing attention to what Schur calls the "social history" rather than to the standard sociological variables, the labeling approach avoids a discontinuity in the sequence of events leading to deviance. As Albert Cohen acknowledges, "the dominant bias in American sociology has been toward formulating theory in terms of variables that describe initial states, on the one hand, and outcomes, on the other, rather than in terms of processes whereby acts and complex structures of action are built, elaborated and transformed."⁴⁷ Becker emphasizes the same notion of studying deviant behavior. Says Becker, ". . . all causes do not operate at the same time, and we need a model which takes into account the fact that patterns of behavior develop in orderly sequence."⁴⁸ Thus, by studying the "social history" of a participant in a sport such as weightlifting, one is better able to understand the deviant subculture which influences the decision to use drugs. One of the most obvious reasons is that, as he achieves greater

⁴⁷Albert K. Cohen, "The Sociology of the Deviant Act: Anomie Theory and Beyond," American Sociological Review 30 (February 1965):9.

⁴⁸Becker, p. 23.

feats, presumably more time outside of training will be spent with lifters who are "significant others." This issue will be taken up in further detail in the next chapter though this issue of "social history" deserves mention. By focusing upon a spectrum of lifters ranging from beginners to world class competitors, as I have done, the process of becoming a deviant takes on grandiose proportions. "The labeling school asserts that deviance outcomes reflect complex processes of action and reaction of response and counterresponse," says Schur.⁴⁹

Such an approach to the study of deviance, in this manner, suggests several implications for social research. First, and foremost, is that the researcher is dependent upon the deviant groups to give one information and insight. I must emphasize the fact that since I was a weightlifter prior to my endeavors of this research project, knowing those weightlifters interviewed helped immensely in my research. Being an "insider" in the sport of olympic weightlifting helped validate my findings. (For a more detailed account, see Chapter IV.) Secondly, such an approach requires new questions to be asked in social research. In the past, research tended to rely exclusively upon the question of cause and effect. Since attention "almost exclusively focused on the underlying forces pushing individuals into deviance there is relatively

⁴⁹Edwin M. Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), p. 11.

little consideration of just what deviance is. Indeed, various specific forms of deviance are often viewed as being caused by the same underlying forces."⁵⁰

In assessing the utility of the labeling approach one is struck by the problematic nature of the definitions of deviance. A critic of this approach is Jack Gibbs⁵¹ who believes that labeling analysts have been less than successful in specifying what kind of social reaction and how much social reaction are required before an act or an individual can be classified "deviant." Gibbs focuses particular emphasis on the "secret" deviant (the undercover violator of rules). This notion of the "secret" deviant is especially appropriate in the case of athletes using drugs. It may be that Gibbs' "secret" deviant has some validity. Gibbs also speaks of the "falsely accused" (those individuals who have not violated a rule but are believed to have done so and are reacted to accordingly).⁵² This also applies to weightlifters I talked with who use drugs. Several lifters said something to the effect, "Well, everyone will think I use drugs, so why shouldn't I?"

Gibbs asserts that labeling theorists would have to

⁵⁰Edwin M. Schur, Crimes Without Victims: Deviant Behaviors and Public Policy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 2.

⁵¹Jack P. Gibbs, "Conceptions of Deviant Behavior: The Old and the New," Pacific Sociological Review 9 (Spring 1966):9-14.

⁵²Ibid.

insist that behavior which is contrary to a norm is not deviant unless it is discovered and there is a particular kind of reaction to it. Thus, if people engage in adultery but their act is not discovered and reacted to in a certain way, then it is not deviant. Similarly, if a person is erroneously thought to have engaged in a certain type of behavior and is reacted to "harshly" as a consequence, a deviant act has taken place.⁵³

John Kitsuse has perceptively noted "that some sociologists view as problematic what he generally assumes as given--namely that forms of behavior are per se deviant."⁵⁴ Indeed, definitions of crime and other deviant behavior are relative according to time and place. As Willard Waller once said,

In spite of all attempts to define social problems objectively and denotatively, value judgments must be brought in somehow, for there is no other way of identifying a condition as a social problem than by passing a value judgment upon it. The only common aspect of all social problems is the fact that someone has passed a value judgment upon them.⁵⁵

Within a given society there may appear an infinite number of negative evaluations of certain behavior patterns. As J.L. Simmons has stated, "almost every conceivable dimension

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴John I. Kitsuse, "Societal Reactions to Deviant Behavior: Problems of Theory and Method," Social Problems 9 (Winter 1962):248.

⁵⁵Willard Waller, "Social Problems and the Mores," American Sociological Review 1 (December 1936):922-23.

of human behavior is considered deviant from the normative perspective of some existing persons and groups."⁵⁶ Thus, any evaluation by social scientists on "the character of deviating individuals must refer to the set of standards from which they are said to deviate and must always be expressed in terms of degree, variation, and circumstance, rather than in simplistic 'either-or' classifications."⁵⁷

An absolutist view of society appears to obstruct the possibility of understanding human behavior meaningfully. On the opposite end of the continuum, and seemingly more useful in its application, is the relativistic position. Such a perspective contends that there is no one way of being human but rather a variety of ways of existing. Values of right and wrong may vary from group to group within the same society, and even from one social context to another. Such a relativistic position is central to the "labeling" school of thought. In Goode's words,

Behavior is not right or wrong in the abstract, but is labeled right or wrong within certain settings by certain groups in a society. Deviance, in other words, is manufactured, created by human judgment. It is arbitrary, not natural. There is no deviance floating around in the cosmos anywhere; it is something that is decided by men and women in society. Deviance is the consequence of a certain kind of negative judgment about someone's behavior. It does not stem from the behavior itself, but from what members of a society think about

⁵⁶J.L. Simmons, "Public Stereotypes of Deviants," Social Problems 13 (Fall 1965):225.

⁵⁷Schur, p. 15.

that behavior.⁵⁸

The point at which behavior becomes deviant is relative. Determinants of that point are the social context and the ensuing norms inherent within that particular group. Deviance, as a concept, implies some variation in the behavior of individuals from certain patterns or norms. A number of criteria specify how people may be classified on the basis of deviation. According to Matza,

. . . the clarity of the path, the distance from the path, the auspices under which the path is constructed or commended, whether one strays from the path in isolation or in company, the penalty, the motives, are commonly imputed for straying and so forth. We inevitably return to the wise observation that there are many kinds of deviance and that deviance is in some measure a matter of degree.⁵⁹

This notion of relativism is an important one. In the weightlifting subculture, for example, those lifters who do engage in drug use are still accepted by many, though not all, of the non-users. Even though they are deviating from the path of normative fair play, many non-users accept such variation and still compete against the users. It should be acknowledged that there are individual non-users who feel cheated as a result of others using drugs, and consequently disband themselves from the sport. Relativism is useful as a tool of analysis in that it may provide an explanation of behavior in terms of the social context and the ensuing norms

⁵⁸Erick Goode, The Drug Phenomenon: Social Aspects of Drug Taking (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company), p. 29.

⁵⁹Matza, p. 10.

in order to locate why some individuals accept such deviance and why others fail to.

It is up to particular groups of society to dictate what parameters shall define socially acceptable behavior within those groups. "Complete deviancy or complete conformity represent 'ideal' types at either end of a continuum and in no society is either extreme ever achieved."⁶⁰ Within that continuum there exists a range of behavior acceptable to society. "This allows for some deviancy being acceptable to society but sets up limits beyond which social and often legal punishments are the consequence of deviance."⁶¹

The reaction of a society to the deviant will be determined, in part, by how the deviant presents himself to society. How and in what context the individual presents himself/herself will determine the nature of the sanctions imposed upon him by society. One often cited case is the homosexual who may live with one partner for several years and circulate with other homosexuals in a discrete way. "By contrast, another homosexual may center his life in the public places of homosexuality, aggressively seek out new partners, and make it known to the broader society that he is a homosexual."⁶²

Within these two examples it appears societal reaction is steadily influenced by the manner in which the "self" is presented. Neither the amount of interaction nor the number

⁶⁰Robert R. Bell, Social Deviance (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1971), p. 9.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. 10.

of participants is necessarily a uniform function of a type of deviance. Rather, the individual has some choice in selecting behavior patterns that will determine the extent to which the broader society knows of his deviance.⁶³

In a discussion of deviance, it becomes apparent that what are defined as acceptable parameters of behavior are not inherent in the act itself but rather in the view held by society towards that act. Satre wrote, "to give oneself laws and to create the possibility of disobeying them come to the same thing."⁶⁴

A relationship thus emerges between the society and the individual. Different societies may define the same thing in different ways. How explicit or discrete the actual deviating behavior becomes depends, in part, on the individual, and in part on the society. In reference to societal reaction to deviance, many cultures provide a forum for deviant expression. Erickson⁶⁵ points out that some societies have special occasions whereby members are allowed to violate the usual rules (e.g., Mardi Gras in New Orleans). In some societies deviance is seen as a natural form of behavior for some groups.

In terms of olympic weightlifting and those individuals using drugs, the reaction of society can be said to be minimal

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Quoted in Matza, p. 13.

⁶⁵Erickson, p. 4, cf. Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (New York: Free Press, 1915).

at best. Outside of olympic competition (once every four years) and world competition (once a year), no other competition tests for amphetamines or steroids, as previously indicated, are conducted. The reaction of society towards deviant activity in an institution such as sport appears minimal. In this regard, though, it seemingly is aware of such deviance; apparently "society" nicely looks the other way. Also, athletes, by definition, are discrete about the use of drugs to outsiders, thus minimizing the effect of negative sanctions.

One additional issue that should be raised is the extent to which the individual has a choice in participating in deviant behavior. On the one hand, does the teenager who grows up in the ghetto have a choice in his participation of the adolescent subculture of a street corner gang? The implications are that this individual is part of a deviant social group because that person has been socialized into such normative expectations. In fact, what does occur is a violation of subculture norms that would, in effect, result in deviant labeling on the part of that group. Thus, the individual may have a choice though still decides to participate in deviant activities.

On the other hand, does the individual choose a deviant practice because it is known by that person that such behavior conflicts with the value of the broader society? Draft resisters, the "new left" and so forth provide more vivid illustrations. This particular notion of choice is important as we shall see in examining how athletes, through very powerful

norms of success and competition, are socialized into taking drugs because "everyone else does it." The individual, in this case, "chooses" to take drugs not to challenge dominant values but instead to keep up with the "norm" of top level competition. So, in terms of values and behavior patterns, there may appear a number of different levels of social deviance with each being relative to the definition of the situation.

It is interesting to examine the "cult" of olympic weightlifters using drugs in light of this latter observation. Individuals engaged in drug use rarely, if ever, see themselves as participating in a deviant act. In many of the interviews I conducted, the athletes expressed the feeling that taking drugs was "part of the game." One respondent even expressed that to compete without drugs was "plain foolish." It now becomes necessary to explore further the notion of subculture which may help depict the rationale for athletes using drugs as an instrumental aide.

The Term Subculture

The term subculture, though not the concept, became common in social science literature after the second World War.⁶⁶ Subculture, in reference to this thesis, shall be defined as "the meanings and values held by a subgroup in a society and

⁶⁶Marvin E. Wolfgang and Franco Fernacuti, The Subculture of Violence (London: Travistoch Publications, 1967), p. 97.

not by all members of a society." In particular, our emphasis will be with groups in some conflict (values) with the broader society.

One definition of culture and subculture provided by Sebald is, "since for sociological purposes culture refers to a blueprint for behavior of a total society, the largest human grouping, subculture, refers to the blueprint for behavior of a smaller group within the society."⁶⁷

In terms of the literature on subcultures one is struck with the stringent implications that such groups that do emerge are deviant from the onset of their origin. A subculture might emerge around an activity which is not regarded as deviant but rather one which is elective and therefore engaged in by a limited and select group (e.g., jazz musicians).⁶⁸ The subculture of olympic lifting, by the mere fact of its existence doesn't necessarily constitute a "deviant subculture." Rather, those individuals who participate in olympic weightlifting and who use drugs may then be said to be part of a deviant subculture. Therefore, one must be careful in assuming that all "subcultures" are necessarily negative. While "subculture" may imply deviancy, it does not follow that deviancy, in and of itself, necessarily implies "wrongness" in twentieth

⁶⁷Hans Sebald, Adolescence: A Sociological Analysis (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, Inc., 1968), p. 205.

⁶⁸I would like to thank Michael Lewis for bringing this important distinction to my attention.

century America.

A subculture can be said to exist when several events occur. Not only is a common goal necessary but, in addition, individuals must have communication with other individuals to ascertain that they have common values and interests. The development of a subculture presents

. . . a common understanding and prescribed ways of thinking, feeling, and acting when in the company of one's own deviant peers and when dealing with the representatives of the conventional world. Once these deviant subcultures come into being and flourish, they have consequences for their bearers and conventional outsiders as well.⁶⁹

In examining subcultures it becomes apparent that a continuum may be drawn in terms of "total" or "marginal" involvement. In terms of total involvement, one type of subculture is referred to by Erving Goffman as the "total institution." Here people live and work with a large number of similarly situated people. Characteristic of this end of the continuum is a minimal amount of interaction with the larger society and one which fosters an enclosed, formally administered life.⁷⁰

In a total institution all aspects of life are carried out in the same location under the same general authority. All aspects of the day's activities are closely scheduled and the whole sequence of activities is imposed from above through a system of explicit rules with

⁶⁹Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg, Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective (New York: MacMillan Co., Inc., 1968), p. 203.

⁷⁰Erving Goffman, Asylums (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. xiii.

a group of designated leaders.⁷¹

The various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution.⁷²

Thus interaction within the "total institution," as Goffman puts it, leads to subcultures which in effect become the entire life for the individual involved.

Since not all subcultures and possibly deviant subcultures are total in their applicability let us consider the opposite end of the continuum--the "ideal." This particular "ideal" type is appropriate when discussing athletes who take drugs. This particular subculture contains those persons who engage in behavior which is not fully accepted by the larger society or the subculture itself. Therefore, such individuals may be said to be "marginal deviants." A "marginal deviant" may be defined as, "one who has been excluded from the conventional world and at the same time has been denied admission and certification in a subculture."⁷³ The "reformed drunk" is one case of a "marginal deviant." Rubington and Weinberg state that:

. . . the reformed drunk is currently sober and intolerant of drinking and he usually believes that he owed his sobriety to no one but himself. These attitudes are shared by conventional people or by most alcoholics. He is out of both worlds. When he comes into contact with either of these worlds, the signs and sym-

⁷¹Bell, pp. 25-26.

⁷²Goffman, p. 6.

⁷³Rubington and Weinberg, p. 320.

bols he puts forth are not accepted.⁷⁴

Thus by our working definition of subculture, the athlete who takes drugs and competes may be said to be part of a "deviant subculture."

One process arising out of deviant subcultures is the importance of peers in shaping and sustaining identities. The weightlifter who uses drugs, thereby assuming a deviant status, comes into contact with people of similar beliefs. Such associations provide powerful mechanisms for the maintenance of identity. Equally important is the use of role-models. Throughout many of the interviews I conducted this notion became rather apparent. Those individuals who did engage in instrumental drug usage often acknowledged that the "best" lifters took drugs. Each competitor I talked to felt that champions took them (drugs) and therefore to become a champion one must use drugs.

Rubington and Weinberg state,

In the course of increased association with similarly situated deviants, the novice more and more comes to define situations in their terms. He begins to appraise his status, his role, and his sense of self-mainly through their eyes. To the extent that he aspires to membership, he will learn their rules and try to abide by them. He engages in simple imitative maneuvers that they, as significant others, appraise. In time, he can look at his actions and appraise them in their terms even though the significant others are now absent. When this change occurs, they have become an effective audience for him.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 320.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 320.

The significance of subculture as measured by amount of time becomes problematic. In measuring time spent in training, for example, actual training time provides a rather poor measure of how important the sport is for the individual. What is more important than the simple measurement of time is the amount of "significant involvement."⁷⁶ An example is a weightlifter who spends his work week in contact with the broader society who may have no involvement with his subculture of sport. However, during training sessions and during competition his life becomes totally immersed in the weightlifting subculture. While most of his waking hours may be spent in the broader society, his "significant involvement" is with the weightlifting subculture. Since much of his time is spent away from lifting, many of his thoughts may be directed at his way of life in the subculture.

While we have seen that it is difficult to measure the significant involvement in a subculture in terms of hours, there exists another dimension concerning continued involvement in the subculture over a period of time. Implicit within this notion is that varying amounts of time are needed for the individual to become socialized to the subculture. Once the individual has been socialized, he must actively participate so that the subculture will be maintained for himself/herself. It is not merely the continuing nature of the basic deviant act (in this case drugged weightlifters) that consti-

⁷⁶Bell, p. 25.

tutes the basis for a subculture but rather the need for continuous contact with other similar individuals in order for the basic deviant act to be carried out.⁷⁷ As Peter Berger has written, "Identities are socially bestowed. They must also be socially sustained, and fairly steadily so. One cannot be human all by oneself and, apparently, one cannot hold on to any particular identity all by oneself."⁷⁸

In sustaining a deviant identity Rubington and Weinberg point out:

. . . to sustain a new identity the person has to make the signs and symbols his own. He has to be able to deliver deviant behavior, so to speak, when others require it of him as well as when he wishes to. These actions must be certified first by them and then by himself. Put another way, if he fails to learn from his teachers, he is in jeopardy of being called inauthentic. This means that he might be accepted only among those groups that have vague ideas on what appropriate behavior for persons occupying his deviant status ought to be.⁷⁹

Let us take the weightlifter who uses drugs when speaking of sustaining deviant identities. The lifter, on occasion, may visually exhibit a new drug he has obtained to his peers in the gym. More often the individual may knowingly and wittingly make jokes about the progress one will make as a result of using the drugs. Both devices serve to demonstrate an individual's allegiance to the deviant identity thus temporarily, at least, reconfirming one's values as consonant with

⁷⁷Schur, pp. 172-73.

⁷⁸Peter Berger, Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective (New York: Anchor, 1963), p. 100.

⁷⁹Rubington and Weinberg, pp. 320-21.

the deviant subculture.

Still another issue to be explored is the impact of the subculture upon the individual personality. It appears that such impact is relative to the significance each person puts upon that particular subculture or deviant subculture. Stated another way, the importance of a deviant subculture will vary according to the relative significance that that particular "reference group"⁸⁰ holds for the individual.

The relative impact of a deviant subculture may be measured in terms of its success in socializing the individual to dissonant values with society. Albert Cohen writes:

Individuals commit deviant acts because they have learned the supporting beliefs and values, from subcultures in which they have participated, . . . and they are sustained in this behavior by the agreement and approval of their reference groups. Social organization determines the distinction of deviant behavior and conformity by structuring the networks of social interaction in which reference groups are acquired and cultural learning occurs.⁸¹

What Cohen has written here explains, in part, the reasons why the athletes who take drugs do not really believe they are violating any norms. For to take drugs is normal to the deviant subculture thus indicating the success of such a group in socializing its members.

What Edwin Schur writes on "role engulfment" may better

⁸⁰A reference group is one from which we receive confirmation of our judgments in addition to acceptance, respect and status. Merton, p. 125.

⁸¹Albert K. Cohen, Deviance and Control (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 85.

explain this phenomenon. Writes Schur:

One major consequence of the processes through which deviant identity is imputed is the tendency of the deviator to become 'caught up' in a deviant role, to find out that it has become highly salient in his overall personality identity [or concept of 'self'], that his behavior is increasingly organized 'around' the role, and that cultural expectations attached to the role have come to have precedence, or increased salience relative to other expectations, in the organization of his activities and general way of life. . . . 'role-engulfment' seems a satisfactory term for the social-psychological impact on the individual.⁸²

Implicit within the concept of role engulfment is the exchange of references we saw take part between the deviant and society. In considering role engulfment we note the major points of reference: how others define the actor and how the actor defines himself. It seems that as role engulfment increases, there is a tendency for the actor to define himself as others define him.⁸³ A person can be "engulfed," at least in a practical sense by a deviant role, despite his definition of himself as a non-deviant (this appears quite often in our study of weightlifters using drugs).

In this connection, we may also recall the "hidden deviant," who is neither publically caught and labeled nor recognized as a deviator by those with whom he interacts but who nonetheless may well find his self-concept and behavior affected by his knowledge that he could be labeled and by his awareness of others' views of people 'like' himself.⁸⁴

When a person does belong to a subculture, he must rationalize, to himself, in some meaningful way, the relation-

⁸²Schur, p. 69.

⁸³Ibid., p. 70.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 71.

ship and differences of the values and norms in the broader society with those in his subculture.⁸⁵ When and if a subculture does provide a means of sanction not found in the larger society the relative significance of the former increases.

The acquisition of status within the new group is accompanied by a loss of status outside the group. To the extent that the esteem of outsiders is a value to the members of the group a new problem is engendered. To this problem the typical solution is to devalue the good will and respect of those whose good will and respect are forfeit anyway.⁸⁶

As Cohen points out, the main ideas "of any particular individual are derived from the subculture to which he is most exposed and with which he most strongly identifies."⁸⁷

When observing weightlifters over the years, I have noticed the tendency of the lifters to separate the users from the non-users. Why is this so? It may be as interaction between members of a subculture takes place, individuals of that subculture mutually influence the thoughts of one another. There appears the development of rationalization with regard to their behavior. In such situations individuals knowingly and wittingly engage in various efforts to insulate themselves from the demoralization and negative self-concepts that often follow from being labeled as deviants.⁸⁸ From my observations,

⁸⁵Bell, p. 29.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 29.

⁸⁷Albert K. Cohen, Delinquent Boys (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955), p. 68.

⁸⁸Schur, p. 75.

I have seen this to be the case on several occasions. Weightlifters who do not use drugs degrade the performances of those lifters who are admitted users. No doubt such actions result in the separation of the two groups.

Erving Goffman addresses this issue in his study of stigma.⁸⁹ Goffman illustrates such notions in various forms of "informal control" aimed at the "management of spoiled identity" in his book. Such devices, according to Goffman, refute the negative imputations that produce deviant identities, though at some point they become primarily devices for learning to accommodate deviant identities that have been pretty much accepted.

One final area of the literature on deviance to be discussed in relation to the research problem is that of Gresham Sykes and David Matza. In examining delinquent youths and their behavior Sykes and Matza contend that "techniques of neutralization" allow for the rationalization of the offending behavior and maintenance of positive self-concepts.⁹⁰ In examining the "cult" of drug users within sport, one notes the "techniques of neutralization" used by the athlete to rationalize his behavior. Justifications are commonly described as rationalizations. Such rationalizations are usually viewed as following deviant behavior and as protecting the individual

⁸⁹Goffman, Stigma.

⁹⁰Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," American Sociological Review 22 (December 1957):664-70.

from self-blame and the blame of others after the act. Sykes and Matza believe that rationalizations may even precede deviant behavior thus making deviant behavior possible. It is by learning these techniques that the juvenile becomes delinquent, rather than by learning moral imperatives, values or attitudes standing in direct contradiction to those of the dominant society.

Sykes and Matza construct five categories of techniques of neutralization in relation to juvenile offenders. First, is a denial of responsibility where the delinquent can define himself as lacking responsibility for his deviant actions. The disapproval of self or others is sharply reduced in effectiveness as a restraining influence. The second major technique of neutralization centers on the injury or harm involved in the delinquent act. Thirdly is the denial of the victim.

Even if the delinquent accepts the responsibility for his deviant actions and is willing to admit that his deviant actions involve an injury or hurt, the moral indignation of self and others may be neutralized by an instance that they injury is not wrong in light of the circumstances.⁹¹

This last notion seemingly applies to the athlete using drugs. The athlete (in this case weightlifters) when asked how one can justify the usage of drugs will respond, "nobody is getting hurt, are they?"

A fourth technique of neutralization explains, in

⁹¹Ibid., p. 668.

part, the drug user's ability to justify continued use of drugs as an aid in competition. This technique appears to involve a condemnation of the condemners, or as McCorkle and Korn have phrased it, a "rejection of the rejectors."⁹² By rejecting the critics, drug users are able to provide themselves with the rationale necessary for the continued usage of drugs in athletics.

Finally, delinquent behavior may be neutralized by an appeal to higher loyalties. Internal and external social controls may be neutralized by sacrificing the demands of the smaller groups to which the delinquent belongs such as the sibling pair, the gang, or the friendship clique.

It is important to note that the delinquent not necessarily repudiates the imperatives of the dominant normative system, despite his failure to follow them. Rather, the delinquent may see himself as caught up in a dilemma that must be resolved, unfortunately, at the cost of violating the law.⁹³

In this chapter, the notion of deviance takes on several implications. First, that deviance becomes a matter of perspective. Behavior in and of itself does not mean deviance. Rather, the group must define deviance to itself and to the deviant himself. Secondly, the role of deviant subcultures in socializing the individual to dissonant values with society is noted. Thirdly, deviance should be studied as a

⁹²Lloyd W. McCorkle and Richard Korn, "Resocialization Within Walls," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 293 (May 1954):88-98.

⁹³Sykes and Matza, p. 669.

process rather than a product. The next chapter will explore such notions as applied to a deviant subculture previously unstudied.

C H A P T E R I I I
THE PHARMACOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF OLYMPIC
WEIGHTLIFTING

Before delving into specific issues of instrumental drug usage in olympic weightlifting, it would be beneficial to provide the reader with a brief introduction into the sport itself. Hopefully this will enable the reader to better understand the context of drug usage. It is beyond the parameters of this thesis to deal totally with the "cult" of olympic weightlifters. Rather, an analysis will be set forth with the intention of depicting those factors which may help explain the phenomenon of drug usage by weightlifters.

Olympic weightlifting, from the onset, suffers from a mild hangover of the "muscle-beach" days within American society. I have found even the most intelligent layman equate lifting weights with personifying a Mr. America. Suffering from previous stereotypes combined with national television's attempts to improve television ratings by showing only the superheavyweights,⁹⁴ it is no wonder the American

⁹⁴A case in point is ABC's Wide World of Sports of October 3, 1974, which covered the World Weightlifting Championships from Manila. In this particular episode only the superheavyweight division was televised. For sake of comparison Vasily Alexeyev of the U.S.S.R. cleaned and jerked 535 pounds at the bodyweight of 320 pounds. David Rigert, also of the U.S.S.R., cleaned and jerked 480 pounds at the same championships weighing 194 pounds, yet the latter was not seen on American television.

public is unaware of an accurate portrayal of the sport.

I first began competitive lifting in 1969. During my first season I placed a respectable fourth in the state championships. Later in the season, I managed to pull a big upset, winning my first big title (the Junior New England Championships in 1970).⁹⁵

Though 1969 was my first year in competition, I had been lifting for two years. As far back as 1967, I had heard particular stories about the "champions" in the sport. One in particular involved a bodybuilder who had been admitted to a hospital as a result of a protein overdose. (I later found out it was not a protein overdose but, rather, a steroid overdose.)

All through the first season I remember my enthusiasm pushing me harder and harder. Some had doubts about how far I would go, but at that time there was no looking back. Then in the spring of that year (1970), an article appeared in one of the weightlifting journals. It spoke of a new drug called dianabol⁹⁶ (an anabolic steroid). I began reading more on the subject, even to the point of selectively going through past sports magazines for related items.

⁹⁵This was the debut championship for American lifter Mark Cameron who has since set many records and is currently seen as the top prospect for an olympic medal.

⁹⁶Dianabol is probably the most popular steroid, being relatively inexpensive and being in pill form. One magazine editorial affectionately spoke of widespread steroid usage in an article title "The Dianabol Decade."

As the years passed, my involvement in the sport of olympic weightlifting intensified. Entering more competitions in New England as well as venturing on to some of the national meets, more and more I began to see the role that drugs played in sports. This became especially true at the national championships. New types of drugs were discussed openly and in private. The meets seemed to provide a forum for lifters to exchange information on the one hand and vials of drugs on the other. Amphetamines and pain killers were being talked about though the major focus of conversation was the anabolic steroids.

One of the first things I noticed at competition was a guessing game among the competitors as to who was on what steroids. Rumors would constantly be circulating to this effect. It was a given assumption by most of the competitors (locally) that those individuals who had won a national championship were on some form of anabolic steroid. The big question was who of the "up-and-comers" had incorporated drugs into their training regime. This of course played a big factor in terms of "psych-out" ploy commonly used by competitors. Arriving at a contest one would hear something to the effect, ". . . say, have you heard what so and so has done in training?" Usually outstanding progress is linked directly to the incorporation of steroids to the training process.

One particular scenario involved a teenage national champion who had, for the first time, used anabolics in pre-

paring for the 1972 olympic try-outs. As it turned out, this person didn't produce very well, but, in my view, the statement that he was on anabolics had a detrimental effect on his competitors.

Of those factors which appeared to influence the athlete to utilize drugs perhaps the most significant was the influence of training partners. Often one member of a club would make fantastic progress (invariably linked to drugs) and thereby encourage other members of the gym to follow suit. On more than one occasion, I saw the persuasive force of such a "role-model" played for other lifters.

This study was designed to explore instrumental drug usage by athletes in the sport of olympic weightlifting. The data source of this thesis deals primarily with individuals in the New England states. The interview schedule, as designed for this study, dealt with many issues. In fact, more information was recorded than could possibly be assimilated into the spectrum of a masters thesis. Therefore, I shall lay heavy emphasis upon those issues as presented and how such may be related to particular findings in light of background materials presented in Chapter II.

In terms of the background information of those interviewed (see Table 1-1) several interesting characteristics are found. For example, the median age of the sample population is 24. Weightlifters, generally speaking, peak in their later twenties or early thirties. This may be one factor

TABLE 1-1

Background Information of Weightlifters
Interviewed (N = 20)

1. <u>Age</u>	Median: 24
2. <u>Education</u>	High School (1) Some College (5) College Graduate (10) Graduate School (4)
3. <u>Military Experience</u>	None (14) Yes (6)
4. <u>Marital Status</u>	No (13) Yes (5) Divorced (2)
5. <u>Social Status</u>	Lower (2) Working (4) Middle (12) Upper-Middle (2)
6. <u>Religion</u>	Catholic (12) Jewish (2) Methodist (1) Protestant (1) No Affiliation (4)
7. <u>Occupation</u>	Student (8) Teacher (High School) (2) College (1) Laborer (7) Semi-professional (2)

attributing to such a high median age of those individuals participating in the sport.

Turning to the variable of education, all of the sample had at least one year of college (except one teenage lifter still attending high school). Ten were college graduates while several others (2) were still in the process of obtaining undergraduate degrees. Four individuals are currently seeking graduate degrees. The average education of those lifters interviewed (in terms of education) is 15 years.

Six persons responded as having some military experience. In reference to marital status, five cases reported being married, thirteen cases reported being single, and two cases reported being divorced. (In one of these cases, weightlifting was attributed as being a prime catalyst in causing the divorce--time spent away from home, emotional ties and so on.)

In asking individuals to place themselves in a social class, the following is a spectrum of the self-attribution found. Two individuals reported identifying with the lower class, four with the working class, twelve with the middle class, and two with the upper class.⁹⁷ Since this interview schedule was conducted by self-attribution it would be safe to discount the responses of "upper class."

⁹⁷Consistently throughout the administration of the interview, respondents would ask me how I defined social class.

One of the more prominent findings dealt with religion. The majority of individuals responded that their religion was Catholic (12).⁹⁸ This is not too surprising in light of the concentration of Catholics in the Northeastern part of the United States. Other religious affiliations reported were Protestant (1), Jewish (2), and Methodist (1). Four of the lifters interviewed said they had no religious affiliation.

Occupation of parents varied widely, though overall, most could be classified as working class occupations.⁹⁹ Employment for the parents varied from custodian, mailman, factory worker, postal clerk, truck driver, hair dresser, waitress, brick layer, food processing manager, to a director of an old age home, I.B.M. operator and electrical engineer.

Occupations of those interviewed also varied. The most common occupation was student (8). The remaining occupations were divided among teachers (3) both high school and college, to laborers (7) of various skills to one engineer and a bartender.

In reference to the issues presented earlier in this thesis, three findings became rather apparent. First, one notes

⁹⁸Several respondents indicated they were Catholics by birth but did not practice their religion.

⁹⁹A technical definition of working class is difficult to arrive at though those I interviewed saw such a notion in terms of income.

the greater centrality the sport had in a person's identity the greater the likelihood of drug usage to enhance athletic performance. Secondly, the role of "significant others" as specifying the initial decision to use drugs becomes apparent. Finally, means of rationalizing such deviant behavior is acquired through the use of "techniques of neutralization." The following paragraphs will depict specific findings in support of these assertions.

In relation to the first finding (the relative importance of the sport and related drug usage), the length of time spent within the sport (number of years one has lifted) did not prove to be a valid indication of drug usage. The findings from my research support the invalidity of these assertions. Of those twelve individuals who admitted using steroids at one point or another, nine persons had been involved in the sport less than two years. Further, of those three remaining cases involvement was less than five years. Thus, the length of involvement within the sport did not prove a reliable indicator of drug usage.

The number of hours spent in training per week did not prove to have a strong correlation with drug usage. There were cases of drug users I interviewed who trained fifteen hours per week and others who trained three hours per week. Of those who trained longer hours several factors enter into the length of training time. One is the fact of having more time to spend in training. Having a job which allows leisure

time, being single and not having a family explain, in part, longer training hours per week. The major point, however, is that actual training time spent with weights did not prove to have a very strong relationship in terms of drug usage. There are better indicators of drug usage as we shall see in other findings.

One such indicator of drug usage was reflected in the question, "How important a part of your life is weightlifting?" From this question one finding became apparent. Drug users indicated the relative significance of weightlifting to be greater than non-users. In ten out of twelve cases of drug users the individuals I spoke with explicitly said that weightlifting was the "most important thing in life." The remaining two cases could not accurately give the importance of weightlifting over a career though both individuals indicated the former as being "very important."

Within the course of my interviews I was impressed with the way drug users saw the sport as the most important thing. Of those ten cases in this category all respondents felt that the sport received priority over other facets of their lives (e.g., career, education). In spite of such priorities eight cases could be said to excel in other areas such as education. The important finding then is not so much that weightlifting actually takes precedence over other activities. Rather, the fact that an individual explicitly states such an attitude will likely coincide with the use of drugs as an

instrumental aid. Comments such as, "It's very important," or "It's definitely number one," typify this category of drug users.

In terms of centrality of the sport and possible correlation to drug usage, I attempted to pursue this issue further. Other items which provided additional information included social life of the lifter, conflict of work, school, social life and family in relation to weightlifting. By focusing upon other activities which may be disrupted as a result of involvement within the sport we are better able to understand the centrality of the sport to the person thus explaining drug usage.

The first item examined dealt with the social life of the weightlifters. Of the drug users (twelve) only five report continuous interaction with other weightlifters outside of training and/or contests. Of those individuals not using drugs (eight) only four report any significant contact with lifters outside of lifting related activities. By definition, most weightlifters come into contact with each other (outside of club members) three or four times per year at contests. Such interactions usually take the form of having a few beers after the contest and "shooting the bull." Only three of the twenty lifters interviewed remarked that they had attended "wild parties."

One of the more consistent findings concerning the social life of the weightlifters was not the actual time spent

but rather the "relative significance" of those interactions. As I previously stated, interaction between weightlifters occurs of the frequency of three to four times per year (outside of club members). Still a great deal of reinforcement occurs in relation to their "reference group."

Over my years of involvement with the sport, I have taken note of the importance of the contests themselves as social events. Meets, as they are known, provide the forum for exchange of training routines, gossip about champion lifters, drug information as well as the exchange of drugs themselves. It appears that many contests serve to bring lifters together not only to compete but also to socialize.

One lifter told me he enjoyed going to the national championships to catch up on the latest information about other lifters and new drugs. On many occasions I have been approached and asked if I could supply someone with anabolic steroids. Still another episode involved a well known weightlifter who showed me his "first-aid kit" which, in actuality, contained vials of various functions (amphetamines, steroids, pain-killers). The interpretation of all this information is the social function such contests provide for the participants. Indeed, both drug users and non-users profit from such interactions in terms of maintaining identities and self-esteem. It does appear though that such experiences are almost mandatory for the drug user. To engage in a deviant activity requires at least a minimum of contact with others of similar beliefs.

In this particular case, minimum is interpreted as three to four times per year.

One final issue which needs to be discussed in greater detail is the notion of "relative significance." Such a process appears fundamental in sustaining deviant identity. In that drug using athletes may only encounter each other several times a year then such interactions must take on more significant importance than other daily interactions with others outside of the "significant" realm. Thus, in taking into account the context of drug usage, the placement of "significant others" becomes paramount for a total understanding of the behavior in question.

In terms of weightlifting, conflicting with other activities (work, school, social life), for many respondents (fourteen) it was in fact the other way around. Work conflicted with weightlifting. School became an obstacle to training, not the other way around. The fact that most respondents answered in this manner may be a direct function of the structure of amateur sports in American society today. The higher up on the scale of achievement one examines, the better lifters indicate work, school and social life become dictated in terms of the best interest of athletic training.

According to most respondents the conflict within familial situations, for the most part, is not manifested to any great extent. Since most of the respondents are single this is understandable as family obligations are probably

slight. The heaviest strain, in terms of family conflict, appears among the married lifters. Time spent away from home (both in terms of meets and training) and money problems were often cited cases of strains on marriages.

The second major theme to be explored concerns the elements entering into the initial decision to use drugs. Why is it some lifters use drugs and not others? Centrality of the sport to one's identity appears to be one factor. There are, however, other socially influencing and socially sustaining forces that enter into the decision-making process.

One factor directly correlated with the initial decision to use drugs is the source of encouragement for the sport. Peer interaction played a key role in drug users' decisions to use such aids in training. Of those individuals interviewed eleven out of twelve users acknowledged the influence of training partners or weightlifting friends in the initial decision to use drugs (in this case steroids).

In most cases (eighteen out of the twenty interviewed) weightlifters noted the encouragement they received from other weightlifters for the sport itself. Verbal support such as "that's good, keep it up" from peers provided the mainstay of notoriety. Such "significant others" appear to provide a great deal of influence in the initial decision to use drugs. Peer interaction provides a steady influence in an individual's decision to participate in deviant activities. The viable influence such a subculture provides in allowing

one to deviate from the "rules of the game" is not surprising. Such is consistent with previous findings, as cited in Chapter II of this thesis, and no doubt provides the individual with the rationale necessary to experiment with the drug.

In this particular study, it appears that the better lifters, who do use drugs, are particularly sensitive to the support of peers. When drug users were asked who they looked to for support of drug usage, ten out of twelve reported other lifters. The remaining two cases spoke of "best" friends, or roommates as important sources of acknowledgment. Several responses were as follows: "I enjoy receiving recognition from my training partners," or "definitely my lifting friends." Of those cases not using drugs (eight), five indicated other lifters as being important sources of encouragement. The major difference between users and non-users appears to be the role of lifting peers as a support group. Users more often spoke of peer recognition than did non-users.

The level of competition under analysis relates to the use of drugs. Invariably all of the lifters with whom I spoke felt that on a national level the use of drugs becomes likely, even necessary. Further, those lifters I interviewed of national caliber, felt that without the use of drugs, they would be operating at a distinct disadvantage. Similarly, nineteen out of twenty respondents professed a belief that drug usage among national caliber lifters was commonplace. Interestingly enough the one remaining case said he was new

to the sport (several months) and wasn't sure at this point in time.

Responses of the weightlifters on the issue of top lifters using drugs are as follows: ". . . top 40% of the lifters take them [e.g., drugs] . . ." to "a lot of the lifters at the top use drugs, they appear less on the local level. . . ." Other lifters said, "top level lifting, it's just incredible," or "90% of your national champions use drugs, probably 50% of your master lifters do." Also, "to become a national champion without drugs would be very difficult. I have no doubt on the international level they are commonplace--especially by the smaller countries in trying to keep up with the better powers."

Such responses as these are common among users and non-users alike. The openness of drug usage as well as conversation has seemingly increased over the past five years. The number of magazine articles on the subject have significantly increased from 1970 to 1975. One possible suggestion for future research is the study of precipitating events leading to attitude change in regard to deviant behavior.

As attitudes have seemingly opened the way for more discussion and usage of drugs within the sport there was one redundant finding of those interviewed--you couldn't become a world or national champion without the use of drugs. Whether such effects of drugs are physiological or psychological is really secondary to the issue. The fact that such beliefs

are held illustrate the central issue. It may be as W.I. Thomas once said, "Things defined as real are real in their consequences."¹⁰⁰ It does appear, for many weightlifters, that such an adage may hold true for becoming a national champion. "The lifter who takes dope will come out ahead," said one lifter jokingly. "A lifter is crazy not to," replied one nationally ranked competitor. As an added digression, most lifters base such assumptions on personal observation. Talking to training partners, conversation with other lifters at contests, and finally magazine articles provide the nucleus for such conclusions on the part of the lifters.

Of the twenty lifters I interviewed, twelve had at one time or other used drugs (primarily steroids) to aid progress in lifting. Sixteen lifters acknowledged having used amphetamines though few (six) reported continued usage. Most of the lifters who had used steroids felt that side effects were rare. Those athletes utilizing anabolics felt that if side effects were encountered, such side effects were justified by the success accompanying drug usage. "Oh, what the hell, might as well win today," said one lifter.

Another variable which may help explain the initial decision to use drugs is the particular source of information. This particular phenomenon involved at least five of the lifters I interviewed. Here it becomes evident that the "role-model" some of the better lifters were following were other lifters. Through

¹⁰⁰William I. Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 23.

my conversations with lifters, it appears that several "outstanding" champions had been influential in changing the attitudes of other lifters concerning instrumental drug usage. The champions had displayed to lifters of lesser caliber the utility of drugs in athletic performance. The better lifters, by playing such powerful "role-models" for this 'reference group,' were instrumental in the initial decision-making process for many of the lifters. One lifter, of olympic caliber, told me that he had been responsible for influencing the attitudes of several of his training partners concerning the use of drugs.

The third major issue to be explored is the maintenance of values related to drug usage. How is it that lifters may participate in a deviant practice (running against the norms of fair play) and maintain a positive self-esteem?

In part, the maintenance of values is derived from the subculture (in this case drug users). Lifters who do engage in drug usage are doing so to enhance their performance as an instrumental aid. The fact that other lifters may be using drugs provides a powerful springboard from which to launch a rationalization. Referred to earlier, this phenomenon is known as the technique of neutralization.

As Sykes and Matza note, the "techniques of neutralization" allow for the rationalization of the attending behavior and maintenance of positive self-concepts.¹⁰¹ As in the case

¹⁰¹Sykes and Matza, pp. 664-70.

of the delinquent offender, it may be that the drug user in sports may not necessarily repudiate the imperatives of the dominant normative system, despite the failure to follow them. Rather, the drug user may see himself as caught up in a dilemma that must be resolved, unfortunately, at the cost of violating the norm of fair play.

There appears within weightlifting circles the saying, "it's part of the game." Drug users apparently are implying that certain norms act contradictory to the "ideal" of sport. Drug users may, in effect, adopt a set of values apart from the larger culture which justify the use of drugs. As we saw earlier, many athletes view the use of drugs as necessary prerequisites for competing at the upper strata of competition.

Many athletes view the use of drugs as necessary, but are such acts seen as legitimate by the competitors involved? Several items on the interview reflect the "technique of neutralization" utilized by drug users. The first items deal with the notion of competition taking drugs and the relative influence such actions may have upon the athlete's decision to use drugs. Of those respondents in my survey all of the drug users replied that without drugs their athletic performances would be at a disadvantage relative to other competitors. Responses of drug users varied from, "Yes, I want to reach my potential--I want to make a name for myself," to "Yes--there's nothing wrong with using drugs." Other responses included, "yes, in the past when I haven't used drugs, I felt at a dis-

advantage." In addition, "Yes, if you see other guys doing big weights and you know they're on drugs, it's not too cool." "Yes, it's necessary--that doesn't bother me." Still another response was, "Yes, I'll continue until they [drugs] hurt or stop competition." It thus appears that many athletes view taking drugs as the only way to make the competition fair--a perfect neutralization. Such justifications of "it's necessary at the top" no doubt provide the user with the rationalization necessary to continue usage. Apparently, drug taking in and of itself becomes a legitimate act from the perspective of the user.

One issue which appeared in the responses of the survey was the justification of drug usage by non-users. In ten out of twelve cases, non-users felt the use of drugs by other athletes to be legitimate as well as practical. Such a finding may be accounted for in the following way. One possibility is the understanding that drugs may be necessary to compete nationally and internationally. Again the instrumental role drugs play in competition is accepted by many non-users as "part of the game." Other possible explanations may be the reluctance of weightlifters to criticize the subculture to which all its members belong. Such criticism would invariably be directed towards the "champions" which each and every weightlifter hold as viable "role-models."

The question directly dealing with this issue is the one asking, "What do you think of those individuals who do en-

gage in drug usage to help their weightlifting?" Of those individuals who had not engaged in drug usage responses varied from: "One should form one's own values--they [the users] aren't being unfair, that's a value judgment," to "Do their own thing," "That's their trip, maybe they don't want to wait for results." Other responses included, "Not being unfair though I'm not sure how sensible they are being--I can sympathize."

In conclusion, this chapter presented the major issues related to weightlifters taking drugs as an instrumental aid to athletic performance. At the onset of this chapter we saw background variables as set forth in light of this study. Most important are the presentation of three major issues in reference to athletic drug users. Reiterating--the more central the sport became (in terms of the respondent's answer) the greater the likelihood of drug usage to enhance athletic performance. Secondly, the role of "significant others" as specifying the initial decision to use drugs becomes apparent. Finally, means of rationalizing such potential deviant behavior is acquired through the use of "techniques of neutralization." We shall now turn to an appraisal of the utility or disutility of this particular study. Such an appraisal will be viewed in light of methodology as reviewed in the next chapter.

C H A P T E R I V

METHODOLOGY REVIEWED

In studying deviant behavior one deficit a researcher faces is the lack of solid data. Becker notes "an inspection of the scientific literature on deviant behavior will show that it assays a very high proportion of theory to fact."¹⁰² David Bordua in his analysis of delinquent subcultures reports that the best available source of facts on boys' gangs is still Frederick Thrasher's The Gang, first published in 1927.¹⁰³

There are many studies of deviant behavior. One might, however, look upon the utility of many such studies with disfavor. Says Becker,

. . . they are, on the whole and with a few outstanding exceptions, inadequate for the job of theorizing we have to do in two ways. First there simply are not enough studies that provide us with facts about the lives of deviants as they live them. Although there are a great many studies of juvenile delinquency, they are more likely to be based on court records than on direct observation. . . . Very few tell us in detail what a juvenile delinquent does in his daily round of activity and what he thinks about himself, society and his activities. When we theorize about juvenile delinquency, we are therefore in the position of having to infer the way of life of the delinquent boy from fragmentary studies

¹⁰²Becker, p. 165.

¹⁰³David J. Bordua, "Delinquent Subcultures: Sociological Interpretations of Gang Delinquency," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 338 (November 1961):119-36.

and journalistic accounts instead of being able to base our theories on adequate knowledge of the phenomena we are trying to explain.¹⁰⁴

It appears, then, that the process of becoming deviant will provide the social scientist with more valuable insight than information such as court records. As Becker so cogently notes, the lives of deviant individuals may be better understood by direct observation than recorded facts. Such a method as observation will reveal the process more acutely than recorded facts thus enabling the social scientist to better predict such behavior.

"Studies of deviant behavior are inadequate for theorizing in a second and simpler sense. There are not enough of them," concludes Becker.¹⁰⁵ For instance, there are few sociological descriptions of the way of life of homosexuals.¹⁰⁶ One of the consequences of insufficient data is the construction of faulty or inadequate theories. Therefore, more studies are necessary in order to provide sound and reliable theories or facts.

The fact of deficient data rests partly upon the be-

¹⁰⁴Becker, p. 166.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 166-67.

¹⁰⁶Evelyn Hooker, "A Preliminary Analysis of Group Behavior of Homosexuals," The Journal of Psychology 42 (1956): 217-25; Maurice Leznoff and William A. Westley, "The Homosexual Community," Social Problems 4 (April 1956):257-63; H. Laurence Ross, "The 'Hustler' in Chicago," The Journal of Student Research 1 (September 1959); and Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "The Social Integration of Peers and Queers," Social Problems 9 (Fall 1961): 102-20.

havior in question. The study of deviant behavior is difficult because deviants regard themselves as outsiders by the rest of society. As a result, analysis becomes problematic. "The researcher," says Becker, "must participate intensively and continuously with the deviants he wants to study so that they will get to know him well enough to be able to make some assessment of whether his activities will adversely affect theirs."¹⁰⁷

The kinds of secrecy involved in deviant behavior creates two major research problems. First, the researcher must find people he is interested in studying (I had no problems on this account). Once an access to a particular group of people is achieved there occurs a secondary problem of convincing those under study that such information is held in confidence. (As I shall later demonstrate, virtually all those individuals I approached were very receptive to the idea of an interview.)

A second major problem encountered by the social scientist is to depict an accurate and complete account of deviant behavior. To do so often requires that the observer must spend time in the subject's natural habit.¹⁰⁸ The ensuing process of gaining confidence may involve enormous amounts of time and energy.

Further, the researcher faces moral problems involved

¹⁰⁷Becker, p. 168.

¹⁰⁸See Eliot Liebow, Tally's Corner.

in studying deviance. Significant here are the issues of how one shall evaluate behavior conventionally regarded as evil and where one's sympathies lie. As Ned Polsky confides,

If one is effectively to study law-breaking deviants as they engage in their deviance in its natural setting, i.e., outside of jail, he must make the moral decision that in some ways he will break the law himself. He need not be a 'participant observer' and commit the deviant acts under study, yet he has to witness such acts or be taken into confidence about them and not blow the whistle.¹⁰⁹

In examining social organization and social process there appear several categories or several viewpoints one may adopt in analysis. One must choose either the viewpoint of a member of these groups or the viewpoint of an outside observer. Herbert Blumer contends that people act making interpretations of the situation in which they find themselves. The behavior, says Blumer, is adjusted in such a way as to deal with the situation.¹¹⁰ We, as social scientists, must take either the viewpoint of the person or group in whose behavior we are interested.¹¹¹ Says Blumer,

We must catch the process of interpretation through which they construct their actions. . . . To catch the process, the student must take the role of the acting unit whose behavior he is studying. Since the interpretation is being made by the acting unit in terms of objects designated and appraised, meanings acquired, and decisions made, the process has to be seen from the standpoint of the acting unit. . . . To try to catch the interpretive process by remaining aloof as a so-called 'objective' observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectivism--the objective observer is likely to fill in the process of

¹⁰⁹Becker, p. 171.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 172.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 172.

interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which it uses.¹¹²

Best known of this kind of insider participant observation report is Howard Becker's study of jazz musicians. In a well written book titled Outsiders, Becker speaks of his own experience as a jazz musician. The unique feature of Becker's work is that later, after his association with jazz musicians had started, he developed a professional interest in sociology. Emerging from his experience as a jazz musician and as a sociologist, Becker wrote some influential pieces of sociological work, the best known of which is his essay on "Becoming a Marihuana User." Another often cited case study utilizing participant observation is that of Ned Polsky's focus upon pool-hall hustlers.

Participant observation is not without its critics, however. Jack Douglas believes such studies may pose some of the most difficult problems to the sociologist. "Insider reports are often written as rhetorical justifications for one's way of life, or even worse, as titillating reports on sinfulness written for meretricious purposes."¹¹³ Douglas also points out the possibility of romanticized reports, "written by outsiders who have fallen victim to the common belief that

¹¹²Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," in Human Behavior and Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach, ed. Arnold Rose (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 188.

¹¹³Jack Douglas, Observations of Deviance (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 5.

any form of exciting life must be worthwhile and have its own beauty."¹¹⁴

In spite of Douglas' contention that such methods of observing deviants lacks validity, there does appear to be a more convincing argument in support of such research. One case in point is Tally's Corner, written by Eliot Liebow. Still another account of participant observation is David Maurer's study of the Big Con. Another report of similar nature is Wayland Young's study of prostitution which, in spite of involving far less interaction with the individuals themselves, gives us a considerable understanding of their way of life.¹¹⁵

Such research is useful in that the process of becoming deviant appears significant for social research. These reports study interaction over a period of time rather than a specific incident of deviant behavior. While it may be true, as Douglas points out, that some reports are written by outsiders, many essays have been and continue to be written by insiders. To understand the process of acquiring deviant attitudes it will become necessary for sociology to seek out and encourage writers with the skill and background to write on such issues.

In concluding this section of Chapter IV, it becomes paramount to signify the relationship between such methodologies and my particular study. It has been my goal, throughout this thesis, to study the subculture of olympic weightlifters with

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 9.

particular emphasis upon the emergence of a deviant subculture within the sport itself. Primarily it is hoped that such a study has avoided previous objections to the literature on deviant behavior--namely, the attempt by the researcher to "categorize" such behavior. Rather, a careful and, I hope, objective presentation on related aspects of the sport, quantitatively and qualitatively, has been presented so that the reader may understand the total context of any resulting deviant behavior.

Secondarily, such a study may be said to be valid and reliable from the perspective of being studied by an "insider." Since I have known the majority of those interviewed for more than five years, and since I am a participant in the sport, it is my contention that the findings presented are reliable. The fact that I have discussed the same issue of drug taking with these athletes for several years previous to the project itself tends to verify the findings of this study.

The methodological approach to this thesis has combined both participant observation techniques and semi-structured interviews as a mode of inquiry. In the following paragraphs I shall depict the order of events which has led to the findings as set forth within this thesis.

As previously stated in Chapter III, the sport of olympic weightlifting has been the mainstay of my recreational in-

involvement for over six years. It was at the onset an "insider's" viewpoint of the phenomena of drug usage within a particular sport. Much like the works of Polsky and Becker it was my personal involvement within a particular activity which came first with a sociological work manifesting itself at a later date. From the perspective of this thesis, the advantages were many. First and foremost was my "insider's" status. Such a status allowed, quite easily, the access to information (formally as well as informally) I might not otherwise have had. Secondly, I might add, and sometimes neglected, is the factor of motivation. I emphasize the enjoyment I had in exploring an issue which is central to the sport with which I am involved. It is my contention that were such motivations encouraged in all areas of sociology, the discipline would grow in many ways. Thus the factors of "insider's" status combined with motivation provided for consistent and reliable findings.

Parts of this thesis refer to personal scenarios which occurred prior to the commencement of this project. Since the reconstruction of such events becomes problematic the inclusion of such materials is minimal. Such information does, however, provide leads which eventually found themselves arising in the interviews.

Most of the information utilized for this study came from interviews with twenty olympic weightlifters (primarily from the New England states). Ability of those interviewed

ranged from beginners, usually in the sport for several months, to world class competitors. The interviews incorporated within this study may be termed "semi-structured interviews."¹¹⁶ Such a conduct of inquiry allows the interviewee to respond to what are considered to be important questions relative to given issues. The objective of such a design is to elicit rich, detailed materials that can be assimilated into qualitative analysis.¹¹⁷ The interview itself was applied to weightlifters with whom I have had at least marginal contact with in terms of being on the lifting "circuit."¹¹⁸

In the design of the interview itself, several themes were focused upon in relation to those issues being explored. First and foremost was the centrality of the sport to that individual. Questions dealing directly with the importance of weightlifting to the interviewee were structured to assess the relative centrality of the sport to one's identity. Conflict with other activities (e.g., home, school, and social life) were added as indicators of centrality.

Secondly, were the series of questions dealing with the individual's source of information concerning drug usage

¹¹⁶John Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 76.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 76.

¹¹⁸Weightlifting meets generally take place five to six times a year within the New England states. Competing with any degree of regularity constitutes the "circuit."

in the sport? Did the individual view drugs as "part of the game?" Do champions use drugs? Are drugs necessary to compete? All of these questions were introduced in various forms so as to note, first, if the individual viewed drug usage as common practice and, secondly, on what level did such behavior become apparent, if at all. This section of questions was introduced in an attempt to measure factors leading to the initial decision to use drugs. It is interesting to note that individuals viewing drug usage as universal often cited such factors as being informed by champions as influencing their initial decision to use drugs.

Finally, several questions concerned themselves with the maintenance of such values. Since I have presented the findings of the interview in Chapter III, I need not elaborate here. In terms of methodology such questions took the form of whether or not the individual felt his competition took drugs and if such were likely to influence the athlete's decision to use drugs. Additionally is the question dealing with training partners taking drugs and that factor's influence on the taking of drugs.

In retrospect, I did not encounter very many administrative problems in conducting the interviews. My interviews usually lasted anywhere from fifteen minutes to one and one-half hour. Most interviews, however, averaged approximately forty-five minutes. Though many of my interviews were not held in absolute seclusion, I do feel what I asked was in what may be

"termed" good situations. Most (9) interviews were conducted in private with several (7) being completed in lockerrooms or (4) gymnasiums at contests. Distractions, for the most part, were minimal and probably did not contaminate the results.

Though I anticipated more or less informal conversation, all of my respondents were loyal in staying with the issues I presented. Several respondents even seemed enthusiastic at the idea of someone doing a study of weightlifters. I was fortunate in having access to several champions. I did find several individuals of this caliber willing to give me an opportunity to discuss such matters. What impressed me the most about this strata of individuals was not only the content but the delivery of their answers. Each and every person of national caliber gave me well thought out answers, taking much care to assure I understood what was being said. It was obvious that they had given the subject matter much thought and were interested in conveying this information to someone doing a study.

In terms of the information assimilated into the thesis itself, as previously cited, such takes the form of first-rate past literature. Past literature on the phenomenon of drugs in sport as well as studies on deviance were utilized in this section. Secondly, I called upon past and present observations of my own where applicable. Finally, and perhaps most important, are the findings revealed within the twenty interviews.

I would hope this thesis will add, albeit a small part, to the knowledge of deviant behavior and deviant life styles.

AFTERTHOUGHT

The subject of this thesis is a delicate one. How does one approach a sport which means a great deal with potentially damaging materials? It is my hope that this thesis has not dampened but enlightened the sport I love.

On one level, it is interesting to examine sporting enthusiasts. Drinking ten cups of coffee before a sporting event would be more favorably looked upon by such people than would the administration of ten milligrams of an amphetamine. Even if the ten cups of coffee would be physically more damaging than the pill, the idea that the latter constitutes a deviant practice surfaces as an issue.

It is not my intention to equate anabolic steroid usage with shooting speed or heroin. Obviously, the athlete who uses drugs to enhance his motor performance has different manifestations of the product than does the non-straight who "shoots-up" for kicks. What is significant is the fact that people in condemning one form of deviance and not others, is symptomatic of a paradoxical malaise.

One final notion to be discussed is the meaning drug usage by athletes has on the sports world. The role that drugs have assumed in modern athletics may be only a part of the larger whole. The central issue becomes one of the institution of sport and the role technology shall play in the former. Not

only is technology represented in sport by drugs but also by other "artificial" aids--the shoes worn by a runner, the pole used by the pole-vaulter or even the type of swimsuit worn by a swimmer. All of the aforementioned have become and will likely continue to be issues in contemporary sport competition. "Sports in the future must deal with these and related issues successfully or they will destroy the institution of sport.

The capabilities of the human being appear to be enormous in the amount of tonnage lifted or the time which one is able to swim 100 meters. Progress itself is attained through the utilization of newer and more efficient training methods. In that technology has seemingly sealed the victor's stand, the institution of sport must deal with a consideration of what is legitimate to the competitors involved."

This thesis has derived from personal involvement as well as professional interest in the study of the sociology of sport. In particular, this project has addressed behavior which manifested itself as a result of drug usage within the sport of olympic weightlifting. It is the hope of the author than an understanding of that behavior has been made possible by the writing of this thesis.

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